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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE*

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL			4
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	5
II.	MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	9 - 11	7
III.	ORGANIZATION OF WORK	12 - 18	8
	A. Election of officers	12 - 15	8
	B. Participation in the work of the Committee	16 - 17	8
	C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	18	8
IV.	ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	19 - 74	9
	A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 A	19 - 52	9

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It will be issued subsequently in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35).

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
	1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	19 - 33	9
	2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	34 - 47	13
	3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/68	48 - 50	16
	4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	51	17
	5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	52	17
B.	Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 45/67 A and B	53 - 74	19
	1. Regional seminars	54 - 59	19
	2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	60 - 67	20
	3. Information activities	68 - 72	22
	4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	73	22
	5. Proposal for establishing a computerized database	74	23
V.	ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/67 C	75 - 86	24
VI.	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	87 - 95	27

Annexes

I.	Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session	31
II.	Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the Twenty-eighth United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Madrid, 27 to 30 May 1991	34

CONTENTS (continued)

		Page
III.	Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Montreal, 28-30 June 1991	39
IV.	Declaration adopted by the Fifth United Nations Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 26 to 27 August 1991	41
V.	Declaration adopted by the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 28 to 30 August 1991	44

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 November 1991

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 45/67 A of 6 December 1990.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the General Assembly requested it to consider and recommend to the Assembly a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee was composed of 23 Member States as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. 1/

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the Assembly 2/ were first endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Those recommendations were reaffirmed by the Committee in its subsequent reports 3/ and were endorsed by the Assembly with overwhelming support on each occasion. The Assembly also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.

3. Despite the repeated and urgent appeals of the Committee, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee is of the view that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on these recommendations would contribute to promoting a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee has also reiterated its appeals to the Security Council to take action urgently to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990, which provides the most comprehensive, practical and universally accepted framework for peace.

4. The Committee believes that, with the recent manifestation of a renewed international determination to ensure equity, justice and consistency in the application of the principles of international law, it is of the utmost importance to intensify efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this regard, the Committee has continued to stress the importance of implementation of all General Assembly and Security Council relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East situation.

5. During the past year, and particularly in the aftermath of the conflict in the Gulf, the Committee expressed its most serious concern at the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and at the continued imposition of harsh repressive measures by the occupying Power, Israel. The Committee decided to do everything possible to strengthen its role in monitoring the situation of Palestinians under occupation and promoting the adoption of concrete measures by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention 4/ to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 of the Convention. In this regard, the Committee

expressed full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General regarding the convening of a meeting of the High Contracting Parties in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990).

6. The Committee strongly deplored Israel's continued reliance on military force to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, which had continued for a fourth year against overwhelming odds. The Committee further deplored Israel's rejection of the Palestinian peace initiative of December 1988, of the United Nations resolutions aimed at advancing the peace process, and of all other efforts to promote peace. The Committee also condemned the intensification of land confiscation and of the settlements policy and practice pursued by Israel in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the imposition of a prolonged general curfew in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during and after the conflict in the Gulf, and the increasing restrictions on freedom of movement and economic activity of Palestinians, which greatly jeopardized their livelihood.

7. The Committee reaffirmed that Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories and its denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, and to return to its homes and property, constitute the principal obstacle to the achievement of a just peace.

8. The Committee was concerned that the continued stalemate in the peace process, together with the ongoing repression of the intifadah and the creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the worsening economic and other living conditions of Palestinians in the entire region, might lead to disastrous consequences for the Palestinian people as a whole. The Committee believed that a solution was urgently needed in the aftermath of the Gulf War, taking into account the new opportunities that now exist, on the basis of international law and in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which must be applied in an even-handed manner.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

9. The Committee's mandate for the year 1991 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, by which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights; 5/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and thereafter;

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

10. In its resolution 45/67 B of the same date, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

11. In its resolution 45/67 C of the same date, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

12. At its 175th meeting, on 6 February 1991, the Committee re-elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba)

Rapporteur: Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta)

13. At its 178th meeting, on 16 July 1991, the Committee also elected Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman.

14. At its 180th meeting, on 7 October 1991, the Committee elected Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur in place of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta).

15. At its 177th meeting on 8 April 1991, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1991 (A/AC.183/1991/CRP.1/Rev.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 10 April 1991, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 19 April 1991, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental organizations. The Committee also decided to invite Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

17. During 1991, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 6/ The Committee also welcomed the additional participation of Qatar as from 22 February 1991.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

18. At its 175th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 7/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Borg Olivier (Malta). Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group. Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) was elected Chairman of the Working Group as from 7 October 1991.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

19. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

20. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on a number of occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see paras. 34-35 below).

21. The Committee, with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and agencies, as well as information collected by Governments, non-governmental organizations, individual experts and persons from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee, and other sources.

22. The Committee expressed its support for the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian people for the end of Israeli occupation and for the achievement of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee noted that the intifadah had continued for a fourth year despite overwhelming odds and increased repressive measures, and that it had pursued its efforts to maintain the structure and well-being of Palestinian society through organizing popular and civil committees for self-defence, medical relief, information and public education, as well as provisions and supplies. The Committee received repeated appeals from Palestinians living under occupation urging the United Nations to do all in its power to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people, to meet emergency needs, and to bring about the impartial and comprehensive implementation of all United Nations resolutions, and expressing their determination to remain on their land and to maintain and consolidate their resistance to Israeli occupation.

23. The Committee noted with deep concern that, in its efforts to suppress the intifadah, Israel had continued to resort to the use of often excessive or indiscriminate force, including shooting at demonstrators, the misuse of tear-gas and punitive beatings. It was reported that the Israeli authorities were effectively condoning, if not encouraging, extrajudicial executions as a means of controlling unrest. In June 1991, a Palestinian human rights group published the names of 47 persons who were said to have been killed in Israel Defence Forces (IDF) undercover operations since January 1989. As at 31 July 1991, according to the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, the

total number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the intifadah through direct responsibility on the part of the Israeli forces, armed settlers, civilians and collaborators, amounted to 966 identified cases. Of these, 812 had died from gunfire, 91 in tear-gas-related incidents and 63 from other causes. In addition, it was reported that 116,118 Palestinians had been injured. An alarmingly high proportion of children, about 25 per cent of the total, were victims of the repression of the intifadah.

24. The Committee noted that Israeli occupation authorities continued to resort to a variety of harsh measures and collective punishments against Palestinians. These measures included deportations, large-scale arrests, detentions, raids on homes and villages, prolonged curfews which culminated during the Gulf War, and the destruction of trees and crops. According to the Israeli military prosecutor, since the beginning of the intifadah until February 1991, 75,000 Palestinians were detained, 14,000 of whom under administrative detention orders, i.e. without charges or trial. A human rights organization reported that the incarceration rate for the occupied territories is by far the highest known anywhere in the world, i.e. close to 1,000 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. The Committee noted with concern reports that the Israeli General Security Service continued to use torture as an interrogation method against Palestinians. Ill-treatment and deteriorating conditions, including a reduction in food rations, had prompted hunger strikes at several Israeli prisons and detention centres in June 1991.

25. It was also reported that, through July 1991, the West Bank and Gaza had experienced a total of 10,391 days of curfews, affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. A total of 2,017 houses and other structures had been demolished or sealed and 118,735 trees had been uprooted. The Committee noted with particular concern the continued lawless and violent actions of Israeli settlers, including attacks on individuals, raids on Palestinian villages and vandalism.

26. The Committee was alarmed at the further increase in Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the confiscation of Palestinian lands in the period under review, in contravention of the provisions of the aforesaid Fourth Geneva Convention and several Security Council resolutions. 4/ It was estimated that, between the beginning of the intifadah and 31 July 1991, a total of 504,120 dunums of land (1 dunum = 1,000 m^2) had been confiscated by the Israeli authorities. Over 230,000 Israeli settlers were reported to reside in some 170 settlements, rural and urban, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including expanded East Jerusalem. The settler population had increased by 9,000 to 10,000 in the West Bank in 1990; it was estimated that 4 per cent of the Soviet immigrants who had arrived in 1990 had settled in the occupied territories. Several new settlements were established and others were expanded in the West Bank in the first half of 1991. Furthermore, it was reported that the Israeli Government had budgeted more than $500 million during the 1990/91 fiscal year for settlements in the occupied territory and related expenses, and that the Housing Minister had drawn up plans to build 36,000 housing units in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. In this connection, the Committee also noted with great concern the continued exploitation by Israel of Palestinian water resources for the benefit of the Israeli population and settlers, to the detriment of Palestinian farmers and residents of the occupied territory.

27. The Committee expressed the greatest concern at the intensification of controls and restrictions against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory during and after the war in the Gulf. The longest-running comprehensive curfew in the territories since they were first occupied in 1967 was imposed for several weeks from mid-January 1991 and was enforced with the use of firearms and summary trials of curfew violators. Palestinians in the occupied territory were confined to their homes, on a 24-hour basis, and curfew breaks would be allowed only every three to four days, for a couple of hours in different areas and at different times, primarily to enable women and young children to shop for food. It was reported that the curfews had caused extreme hardships such as denial of medical care, food and medicine shortages, crop and livestock losses, and had had devasting consequences for the Palestinian economy as a whole.

28. In addition, it was reported that a ban was imposed on Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza entering Israel or Jerusalem without a special permit issued by the military authorities. The new permit was the latest, and most restrictive, in a series of pass systems which tightly control the movements of Palestinians living under occupation, and was continued after the end of the war. One third of the total Palestinian labour force from the occupied territory was thereby prevented from earning an income for an extended period of time; by April 1991, it was estimated that 75,000 to 100,000 Palestinians had lost their jobs with Israeli employers.

29. It was also reported that these new restrictions were accompanied by punitive measures affecting the Palestinian economy, such as the imposition of fines on a vast scale by the military personnel for stone-throwing, curfew violations and other security offences; severe restrictions on Palestinian capital transfers, imports, exports and business licences; an oppressive system of taxation, including the excessive use of force in the collection of taxes; and collective punishments in the form of bans on Palestinian commercial activity.

30. The new pass regulations were also reported to have had damaging consequences for education, culture and freedom of worship. Large numbers of Palestinians from the West Bank were prevented from praying at the holy sites in Jerusalem or from participating in the city's cultural and intellectual life. Many students and teachers, as well as employees of research centres, newspapers and other institutions, were negatively affected by the restrictions. Moreover, as of June 1991, it was reported that nearly 70 per cent of university students - those at Najah, Birzeit, and the Islamic University at Gaza - continued to be denied the right to enter their universities, and there was no indication as to when they might be allowed to reopen.

31. The Committee was disturbed by the imposition of additional measures restricting access to proper health care services for Palestinians. Measures continued to be taken to prevent those wounded in the intifadah from receiving the hospital care they required, including delay and blocking of the transport of the injured, repeated attacks on hospitals and detention of the injured inside hospitals and clinics. Measures were also taken against the operation of the primary health-care programmes carried out by Palestinian clinics and health-care committees, including the closing or demolition of clinics and the confiscation of equipment. Fees for government health services were

increased, causing particular hardship to poor sections of the population. Increased restrictions on travel to Jerusalem resulted in further reductions in the availability of medical care for Palestinians as the new regulations interfered with transporting of patients and medical personnel to el-Mukased and other hospitals in East Jerusalem, which serve those with serious health problems who cannot find suitable treatment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Committee further deplored that, during the Gulf War and despite the many urgent appeals, the military authorities had not taken adequate measures to ensure the safety of the Palestinian population living under occupation through the distribution of gas masks and other protective gear, and the installation of warning systems. In view of the grave deterioration of health conditions in the occupied territory, the Committee deplored that Israel had continued to refuse to cooperate with the Special Committee of Experts established by the World Health Assembly and to allow it access to the area.

32. The Committee further noted that the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in his annual report 8/ had stated that there had been no improvement in the conditions of work and life of the workers of the occupied Arab territories and their families and in fact, as a consequence of the Gulf War and measures taken by the Israeli authorities, the workers of the territories and their families had been put into a more precarious position than they had known for some time. The consequences of those events had served to aggravate an already difficult economic situation caused by various constraints on agriculture, industry and other sectors of the economy. In addition, the relatively poor efforts that had previously been made to promote development and employment opportunities in the territories, commensurate with the requirements of a rapidly growing labour force, had resulted in lower living standards, disturbing social conditions, increasing unemployment and general tension.

33. Taking into account the continuing intolerable situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Committee wishes to draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of the aforesaid Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council, to the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to all concerned to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a just settlement. The Committee further wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal efforts in this regard. Above and beyond protective and emergency relief measures, the international community must take all possible measures to halt the rapid deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to develop socio-economic structures that will lead to the genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory in preparation for independent nationhood. The Committee noted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had undertaken the implementation of a number of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

34. The Chairman of the Committee on a number of occasions drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman condemned the resumption by Israel of its policy of deportations as well as the indiscriminate shooting of demonstrators by the army, and the intensification and expansion of collective punishment such as the imposition of curfews and mass detention of Palestinian civilians, including minors. She drew attention to urgent appeals received by the Committee from Palestinians in the occupied territory requesting immediate action by the United Nations to ensure their safety and protection. She also deplored the intensification of the settlement policy and practice in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman pointed out that those policies and practices were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and requested that Israel accept the de jure applicability of that Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967 and abide scrupulously by the provisions of that Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Chairman appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council and to all parties concerned, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to take all necessary measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify all efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

35. The following letters by the Chairman of the Committee were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council: (a) letter dated 18 December 1990 (A/45/881-S/22012); (b) letter dated 14 January 1991 (A/45/925-S/22073); (c) letter dated 6 February 1991 (A/45/915-S/22207); (d) letter dated 1 March 1991 (A/45/968-S/22294); (e) letter dated 26 March 1991 (A/45/985-S/22388); and (f) letter dated 18 April 1991 (A/45/998-S/22511).

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

36. The Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate and participated in Council debates as necessary.

37. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory at its 2953rd, 2954th and 2957th meetings, on 7, 9 and 16 November 1990, and at its 2965th to 2968th, and 2970th meetings, on 5, 8, 10, 12 and 20 December 1990, respectively, having before it the report submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General (S/21919 and Corr.1 and S/21919/Add.1-3) in accordance with resolution 672 (1990).

38. The Chairman of the Committee spoke in the debate at the 2954th meeting of the Security Council, on 9 November 1990, and praised the report submitted by the Secretary-General as a very useful and valuable document that had provided a better understanding of the imperative need to meet the challenge

issued by Israel and to take all steps necessary to accelerate the process of reaching a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict and, thereby, the question of Palestine. She recalled the Assembly's repeated call for an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. She urged the Council to set up a system of protection for the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Arab territory. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should find the necessary means of ensuring respect for that Convention by Israel, as the occupying Power. She hoped that the debate would lead to the adoption of a resolution that would guarantee the Palestinian population effective protection and represent a decisive step to a comprehensive solution of the crisis in the Middle East.

39. At its 2970th meeting, on 20 December 1990, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 681 (1990), in which it deplored the decision by the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, to resume the deportation of Palestinian civilians; urged the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the aforesaid Convention, of 1949, to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967; called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for its obligations under the Convention in accordance with article I thereof; requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea expressed in his report of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention and for this purpose to invite the Parties to submit their views on how the idea could contribute to the goals of the Convention, as well as on other relevant matters, and to report thereon to the Council; also requested the Secretary-General to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, making new efforts in this regard on an urgent basis, and to utilize and designate or draw upon the United Nations and other personnel and resources present there, in the area and elsewhere, needed to accomplish this task and to keep the Security Council regularly informed; further requested the Secretary-General to submit a first progress report to the Council by the first week of March 1991 and every four months thereafter, and decided to remain seized of the matter as necessary.

40. The Committee noted that, prior to the adoption of resolution 681 (1990), the President of the Council made a statement (S/22027), on behalf of its members, by which the members of the Council reaffirmed their determination to support an active negotiating process in which all relevant parties would participate leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations which should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and which should take into account the right to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. The members agreed that an international conference, at an appropriate time, properly structured, should facilitate efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the members were of the view that there was no unanimity as to when would be the appropriate time for

such a conference. The statement further said that in the view of the members of the Council, the Arab-Israeli conflict was important and unique and must be addressed independently, on its own merits.

41. At the 2973rd meeting of the Security Council, on 4 January 1991, the President of the Security Council made a statement (S/22046) on behalf of its members, expressing deep concern about recent acts of violence in Gaza, especially actions by Israeli security forces against Palestinians, which had led to scores of casualties. The members of the Council deplored those actions, particularly the shooting of civilians. They reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and requested that Israel, the occupying Power, fully comply with the provisions of the Convention.

42. The President made a further statement (S/22408), on behalf of the Council, at its 2980th meeting on 27 March 1991, by which the members of the Council expressed grave concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and especially by the serious situation resulting from the imposition of curfews by Israel. The members of the Council deplored the decision of 24 March 1991 by the Government of Israel to expel four Palestinian civilians in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and called upon Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

43. In a letter dated 23 May 1991 (S/22634), the Permanent Representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Cuba, India, Zaire and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Yemen requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to examine the situation created by the deportations by Israel of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

44. At its 2989th meeting, on 24 May 1991, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 694 (1991), in which it declared that the action of the Israeli authorities of deporting four Palestinians on 18 May was in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; deplored this action and reiterated that Israel, the occupying Power, refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories and ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported.

(c) Visit by the President of the General Assembly to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan

45. Professor Guido de Marco, President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, visited the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan from 2 to 7 January 1991. He was accompanied by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, and staff. The President met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. David Levy, and other Israeli officials. He visited the Jabalia, Beach and Nuseirat refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, and the Jalasone refugee camp in the West Bank. He also visited a number of clinics and other installations and met with prominent Palestinians as well as with representatives from

Palestinian women's organizations, UNRWA officials and others, who briefed him on the current situation with regard to the intifadah. In Jordan, the President met with Crown Prince Hassan, Mr. Modar Badran the Prime Minister, Mr. Taher al-Masri the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other senior government officials. He also met with Mr. Farouk Qaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the PLO, and other PLO officials. He visited the Baqa'a, Wadi Seer and Jerash refugee camps and met with UNRWA, UNDP and other United Nations officials and diplomats.

46. At its 176th meeting, on 22 February 1991, the Committee was briefed by Professor de Marco on his visit to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan. In view of the importance of the President's report and its relevance to the work of the Committee, the Committee decided that the report should be widely disseminated as a United Nations document.

47. In a letter dated 22 April 1991, addressed to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee transmitted the comprehensive report of the President of the General Assembly and requested its circulation as a document of the General Assembly under the item on the question of Palestine (A/45/1000).

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/68

48. By resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990, the General Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. It reaffirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. The Assembly also noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process; once again invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in

consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

49. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided to continue to give the utmost priority to promoting the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Committee decided to take an active role in all aspects relating to the convening of the Conference and the search for peace, and to initiate a process of interaction with all concerned for the regular exchange of information and views.

50. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the overwhelming international support for its objectives and by the intensification of efforts among the international community in favour of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as reflected in particular by the recommendations adopted by the regional seminar and by symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under the Committee's auspices (see paras. 54-67 below).

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

51. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Fifty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, held at Abuja, Nigeria, from 27 May to 1 June 1991, and twenty-seventh Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja from 3 to 5 June 1991;

(b) Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Accra from 2 to 7 September 1991.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

52. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted especially the growing concern at all levels of the international community about the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the increasing sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation and to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Final communiqué of the annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at New York on 1 October 1990 (A/46/113-S/22345, p. 3);

(b) Communiqué of the Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, held at New York, on 9 October 1990 (A/45/603-S/21858);

(c) Resolution on the Israeli act of aggression against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary session held at Tunis on 17 and 18 October 1990 (S/21897);

(d) Declaration on the Middle East by the European Council, 30 October 1990 (A/45/700-S/21920);

(e) Communiqué of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on the Situation in Jerusalem, issued at the United Nations on 14 December 1990 (A/45/887-S/22017);

(f) Declaration on the Middle East issued by the 12 States members of the European Community at the meeting of the European Council, held in Rome on 14 and 15 December 1990 (A/45/888-S/22018);

(g) Communiqué of the eleventh session of the Supreme Council of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held at Doha, Qatar, from 22 to 25 December 1990 (A/45/948-S/22191, p. 7);

(h) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session (resolutions 1991/1 A and B, 1991/3 and 1991/6 of 15 February 1991);

(i) Declaration on the Gulf crisis issued on 19 February 1991 by the 12 States members of the European Community (A/45/960-S/22247, p. 3);

(j) Closing statement issued after the joint meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Bureau of the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference and the Nineteenth Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers and of the States members chairing the standing committees of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Cairo, on 21 February 1991 (A/46/94-S/22256, p. 3);

(k) Resolution 13/6 adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements on 8 May 1991 (A/46/8);

(l) Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/19 of 30 May 1991 and 1991/69 of 26 July 1991, and decisions 1991/279 and 1991/280 of 26 July 1991;

(m) Resolutions of the fifty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja from 3 to 5 June 1991 [A/46/390, CM/res. 1334 and 1335 (LIV)];

(n) Declaration on the peace process in the Middle East issued on 29 June 1991 by the European Council (A/46/285-S/22766);

(o) Joint communiqué of the twenty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting issued at Kuala Lumpur on 20 July 1991 (A/46/323-S/22836, paras. 29-31);

(p) Final document of the Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held at Accra from 2 to 7 September 1991 (A/46/659-S/23223);

(q) Statement on the Middle East peace process issued by the European Community and its member States on 10 October 1991 (A/46/573).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 45/67 A and B

53. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, pursuant to their respective mandates, organized a number of regional seminars and non-governmental organization symposia and meetings in 1991. In adopting its programme of work for the year, the Committee decided that in these activities, it would focus on the following priority issues:

(a) The need for convening with urgency the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

(b) The intifadah of the Palestinian people, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the need for international support and assistance;

(c) International protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, including measures that could be taken by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to ensure respect for the Convention by Israel, the occupying Power, in all circumstances;

(d) The increasing Jewish immigration - Israel's settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem - the adverse impact on the achievement of a just settlement of the question of Palestine.

1. Regional seminars

54. In accordance with the programme of work for the 1990-1991 biennium, European and Asian regional seminars were included in the calendar of meetings to be held under the auspices of the Committee in the period under review.

(a) European Regional Seminar

55. The European Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held at Madrid from 27 to 30 May 1991. The Committee was deeply grateful to the Government of Spain for agreeing to provide the venue for this important seminar and for providing the conference facilities free of charge.

56. The Seminar considered the topics of two panels: Panel I: "The intifadah; the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory"; Panel II: "The urgency of the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in

the Middle East". Some details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the participants are contained in annex II hereto.

57. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the Seminar of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians, policy makers, and other experts, including Israelis and Palestinians. The Committee expressed satisfaction that, for the first time, a seminar on this issue had met in a country member of the European Community at a moment characterized by new opportunities, as well as by a rapidly deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Committee noted that the Seminar participants had adopted conclusions and recommendations expressing support for the Committee's objectives for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, particularly through the "land for peace" formula and the "two peoples, two States" principle and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Participants had also expressed deep concern at the violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel and had called for measures to be taken to ensure respect by the occupying Power for the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(b) Other regional seminars

58. At its 177th meeting, held on 8 April, the Committee accepted with gratitude the kind offer of the Government of Cyprus to provide the venue for the Asian Regional Seminar. The Seminar is scheduled to be held at Nicosia from 20 to 24 January 1992.

59. In accordance with established practice, the North American Seminar would have been held in New York immediately preceding the North American NGO Symposium. As the Symposium, however, was held in Montreal, Canada, financial and logistical considerations led the Committee to decide not to hold the Seminar in 1991 and instead to consider organizing another appropriate activity at a suitable time.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

60. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 45/67 A, continued to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine and to expand its contacts with them. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized regional symposia and an international meeting for non-governmental organizations during 1991 in implementation of the Committee's objective. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had further intensified their activities to assist the Palestinian people and to promote a just and comprehensive peace.

(a) North American Regional NGO Symposium

61. The North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at Montreal, Canada, from 28 to 30 June 1991. The Committee expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of Canada for providing the venue for this important event. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultation between the Committee and the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the

Question of Palestine withi: the framework of a preparatory meeting held in New York on 11 and 12 February 1991.

62. The programme for the Symposium provided for two main panels: Panel I: "Palestine: Protecting lives and promoting peace - the impact of the Gulf war"; and Panel II: "Palestine: Responding to current developments". The programme also included 20 action-oriented workshops on various topics related to the question of Palestine. Some details on the Symposium are included in annex III hereto.

63. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that for the first time, a symposium of North American NGOs on the Question of Palestine had been held away from United Nations Headquarters, thereby enabling the Committee to reach out to a wider constituency. The Committee noted that the NGOs had adopted a variety of concrete proposals and action programmes to guide their future work, and had elected a new coordinating committee for the region.

(b) European Regional NGO Symposium

64. The European Regional NGO Symposium was held at Vienna, on 26 and 27 August 1991, and was followed by the International NGO Meeting, which took place from 28 to 30 August 1991. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of Austria for having kindly provided the venue for these two activities at the Austria Centre, free of charge.

65. The programmes for the Symposium and the International Meeting were elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held at Geneva on 25 and 26 March 1991.

66. The Symposium had as its main theme "Time for Palestine: The role of Europe in securing Palestinian rights" and considered the topics of two panels entitled: "Implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine: European collective responsibility and strategies following the Gulf war"; and "International protection of the Palestinian people: The responsibilities of European States as co-signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention". The programme for the Symposium also included seven action-oriented workshops. The Committee noted that the Symposium participants had adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals, and had elected a new coordinating committee for the region. Further details on the Symposium are contained in annex IV hereto.

(c) International NGO Meeting

67. The International NGO Meeting had as its main theme "Palestine Now" and considered the topics of three panels as follows: "United Nations protection, United Nations resolutions, from the Gulf to Palestine"; "Palestine update"; and "NGO Forum - A call to action. What have we accomplished? What remains to be done? How shall we proceed?" Six action-oriented workshops also met within the framework of the Meeting. The Committee noted that the Meeting participants had adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals, and had elected a new international coordinating committee. Some additional details on the Meeting are contained in annex V hereto.

3. Information activities

68. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of regional seminars, regional symposia and international meetings of non-governmental organizations;

(c) Monthly and bimonthly reports on developments relating to the question of Palestine, monitored from the Arabic, English and Hebrew press for the use of the Committee.

69. The Committee noted that the Division had issued a study entitled "The question of Palestine: 1979-1990". This publication updated an earlier brochure on the question of Palestine prepared in the late 1970s. The work on the update of a study entitled "Acquisition of land in Palestine" is nearing completion. The study entitled "Water resources in the occupied Palestinian territory" is being finalized. A compilation of seminar papers entitled "Question of Palestine: legal aspects" is being prepared for publication.

70. An updated issue (April 1991) of the information note entitled "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights" was also prepared. Another information note, entitled "The United Nations and non-governmental organizations activities on the question of Palestine", was updated in October 1991. Both information notes were issued in the six official United Nations languages, as well as in German.

71. In response to a decision of the Committee, the Division prepared monthly issues of the publication entitled "Approaches towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict". These compilations of the relevant statements, declarations and proposals regarding the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, were prepared for the use of the Committee.

72. The following publications were also issued by the Division during the period under review: Resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine: 1990 (A/AC.183/L.2/Add.11) and Special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

73. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1990 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with

appreciation that the International Day had also been commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1990.

5. Proposal for establishing a computerized database

74. In its programme of work for 1991, the Committee included a request to the Division for Palestinian Rights to study the feasibility of establishing a computerized database relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee noted that steps were taken by the Division to initiate such a study, in cooperation with the relevant departments of the Secretariat.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/67 C

75. The Department continued to provide press coverage of all meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Press releases were issued on regional seminars and symposia organized by the Committee, including those held in Madrid and Montreal.

76. All regional seminars and NGO symposia on the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were covered extensively in weekly regional magazines.

77. Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and press releases issued by UNRWA on its activities were reissued and disseminated by the Department of Public Information (DPI).

78. DPI responded to almost 200 inquiries on the question of Palestine between January and June 1991. Additionally, this issue is integrated into the presentation given visitors during the guided tours conducted by the Public Services Section of the Department.

79. DPI continued to distribute its publications, including a revised version of the booklet The United Nations and the Question of Palestine in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish; the booklet For the Rights of Palestinians: Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the booklet entitled Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. A total of 13,703 of these publications, in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish were distributed.

80. The World Chronicle produced a video entitled "Visit of the General Assembly President to the Occupied Territories". Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice, and President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, stresses the human dimension of the question of Palestine and the need to solve this problem through United Nations efforts. The Audio Visual Promotion and Distribution Unit disseminated worldwide to its film and video libraries and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization the video entitled "About the UN: Palestine".

81. Fifty-nine radio programmes of varying lengths on the question of Palestine and related topics were produced between 1 January-30 June 1991.

82. The Department co-sponsored two national encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine in Brussels, on 22 May, and in Bonn, on 24 May 1991. Those two events were hosted in Brussels in cooperation with the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation and with the support of the Commission of the European Communities, and in Bonn in cooperation with the German Association for the United Nations. The theme of the two encounters was the protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli

occupation. Two Palestinian and two Israeli panelists addressed that theme in each of the two cities with brief opening remarks, followed by a substantive dialogue between the four panelists and about 40 senior media representatives who had been invited to participate. The two Palestinian panelists were Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, and Sa'ab Erekat, Professor of Political Science at An-Najah University, Nablus, West Bank. The two Israeli panelists were Yael Dayan, Labour Party activist and author, and Avigdor Feldman, an attorney who co-founded the Israeli human rights documentation centre, "Betselem", and who had appeared in a number of landmark civil rights cases in Israel. The two encounters were moderated by the Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section of DPI.

83. From 3 to 5 June 1991, the Department sponsored in Helsinki, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, an international encounter for European journalists on the question of Palestine. It explored the prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East, and was moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. There were nine panelists: Yasir Abed Rabbo, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO; Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Bir Zeit University, Ramallah, West Bank; Haim Ramon, Member of the Israeli Knesset, Labour Party; Elazar Granot, Chairman, United Workers Party, Israel; Fuchang Yang, Deputy Foreign Minister of China; Simon James Fraser, Middle East Policy Planner, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom; Anatoly Ivanovich Philyov, First Deputy Head, Directorate for the Middle East and North Africa, Soviet Union; William Quandt, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., United States of America; and Mohammed El-Shafei Abdel Hamid, former Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt. There were 62 media participants, including columnists, senior editors and editorial writers. They represented the following news organizations:

Zeri I Populit (Albania); Die Presse (Austria); De Standaard, Le Soir (Belgium); Demokratzia, Duma (Bulgaria); Xinhua (China); CTK, Narodni Obroda, Reflexe (Czechoslovakia); Information, Politiken (Denmark); Helsingen Sanomat, Hufvudstadsbladet, Oy Gig Films Ab, Uusi Suomi (Finland); Le Monde (France); Berliner Zeitung, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Germany); Messimvrini, Ta Nea (Greece); Hungarian Radio, Nepszabadsag (Hungary); Morgunbladid (Iceland); The Irish Times, The Sunday Independent (Ireland); Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica (Italy); Ha'aretz, Davar, New Outlook (Israel); Al-Fajr (Jerusalem); Luxemburger Wort (Luxembourg); The Sunday Times of Malta (Malta); Elsevier, Trouw (Netherlands); NRK (Norway); Palestine News Agency - "WAFA" (PLO); Gazeta Wyborcza Polityka (Poland); Expresso, Publico (Portugal); AZI, România Libera (Romania); El Mundo, El País, TVE (Spain); Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden); La Tribune de Genève, 24 Heures (Switzerland); Cumhuriyet, Milliyet (Turkey); Izvestia, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Novosti, Novoye Vremya (USSR); The Guardian, The Times (UK); Borba, Nedjelja, Oslobodjenje (Yugoslavia).

84. DPI is in the process of completing preparations for a news mission to the Middle East which will take place during the end of October and early November 1991. The mission is conceptualized as a follow-up to the Helsinki Encounter which had as its theme: "Prospects for an International Peace

Conference on the Middle East". It is intended to provide journalists an opportunity to acquaint themselves firsthand with the facts of the question of Palestine. To this end, meetings will be arranged with the leadership of the PLO, senior government officials of Tunisia, Jordan, Syria and Egypt, as well as individual Palestinians in the refugee camps. Twelve senior journalists from Europe will participate in the mission. They represent the following papers:

Le Soir (Belgium); Politiken (Denmark); Helsingin Sanomat (Finland); Le Monde (France); Berliner Zeitung (Germany); Messimvrini (Greece); Irish Times (Ireland); Il Corriere della Sera (Italy); Trouw (Netherlands); Público (Portugal); El País (Spain); The Guardian (UK).

85. The United Nations information centres/United Nations information services have taken an active role in disseminating information on the question of Palestine. All European UNICs/UNISs played a part in the selection of journalists, and in some cases panelists, who participated in the International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine; UNIC Brussels and UNIC Bonn assisted Headquarters in organizing two national encounters, in Brussels and Bonn respectively. Other UNICs/UNISs have also undertaken specific programmes with respect to the question of Palestine, e.g. Bogota, Cairo, Tokyo.

86. The Department held two briefings at Headquarters for NGO representatives relating to the question of Palestine. The first was entitled "A UN perspective on Palestinian rights", and the second, "Prospects for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East". Total participation was 1,000 NGO representatives. The Department also transcribed and edited summaries of the briefings mentioned above and distributed them to UNICs/UNISs, and to the headquarters of over 1,200 NGOs associated with DPI. Additionally, DPI regularly features and distributes United Nations information materials, documents and press releases to NGO representatives, including all documents disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

87. The year under review was one of great change, marked by the tragic events of war, but also by renewed hopes for peace with justice in the region, as the international community expressed its determination to ensure equity and consistency in the application of the principles of international law and of United Nations resolutions. Solidarity with the Palestinian people became an even more urgent task in the aftermath of the conflict arising from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, as their suffering increased manifold and their existence as a people appeared increasingly threatened. Israel's stepped-up colonization and economic strangulation of the occupied Palestinian territories, its increasing violations of human rights, and the growing numbers of Palestinian refugees made it imperative that a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine be finally achieved. At the same time, the new spirit of international cooperation in resolving regional conflicts peacefully and the current initiatives in this regard have given rise to hope that a concrete peace process can be initiated.

88. The Committee expresses its continued and full support for the intifadah, the courageous struggle of the Palestinian people, to end Israeli occupation and implement the proclamation of independence of November 1988. Through the intifadah, the Palestinian people has clearly expressed its national purpose and its determination to bring about the exercise of its inalienable rights and has affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is its sole legitimate representative. The Committee reaffirms the international consensus that full respect for, and the realization of, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable for the solution of the question of Palestine. The Committee calls once again upon Israel to recognize and respect the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people and to acknowledge as well the desire of its own people for a future based on peace with justice. The Committee appeals to all progressive forces in Israel further to intensify their efforts to bring about this essential objective.

89. The Committee welcomes the convening by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of a conference for the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the land-for-peace principle, to ensure security and recognition for all States in the region, including Israel, as well as the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee expresses the earnest hope that such a conference will bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine based on internationally recognized principles and United Nations resolutions. The Committee hopes that the role of the United Nations will be generally intensified in this process.

90. The Committee recalls that an international consensus has already been achieved on the essential principles for such a solution. In its first report to the General Assembly, the Committee had recommended modalities for the attainment of Palestinian rights (see annex I), later complemented by the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983. The intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of 1988 led to an even wider consensus, as shown once again by the near-unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/68

of 6 December 1990. In that resolution the Assembly called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

91. The Committee recalls the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace contained in that resolution, namely:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites.

92. Pending progress towards a political settlement, however, the Committee considers it is of the utmost urgency that all necessary measures be taken to protect the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the past year, Israel's continued violation of the Convention has led to increasing casualties and the deterioration of already unbearable living conditions. A matter of special concern is the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of Israeli practices. The Committee considers that it is now all the more urgent for the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention and for the United Nations system as a whole to ensure that Israel abide by its obligations as the occupying Power and in particular, to implement Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990 and subsequent resolutions.

93. The Committee is deeply concerned at the growing Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as manifested in the intensified establishment and expansion of settlements, confiscation of land and water resources and settler vigilantism, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations resolutions. The growing influx of new immigrants exacerbates the situation. The Committee considers that it is incumbent upon the Security Council to review the matter urgently and to undertake appropriate measures, in conformity with the Fourth Geneva

Convention and the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to deal with the situation.

94. The Committee wishes to reaffirm that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee accordingly reiterates its call upon the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on Governments and on intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to sustain and increase their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

95. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increased international support for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine in the year under review. The Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars, NGO meetings and other informational activities has played a valuable role in this process and it will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate. The Committee will continue and intensify its efforts to ensure that those meetings provide a useful forum for an in-depth consideration of the substantive issues to be addressed in any peace process, with the assistance of experts from all regions and representing diverse points of view, including Palestinians and Israelis. The Committee once again extends an invitation to all Governments, including those of the United States of America and Israel, to participate in its work and in the events organized under its auspices.

Notes

1/ At the 59th meeting of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the President of the General Assembly informed the Assembly that in accordance with its resolution 3376 (XXX), of 10 November 1975, the members of the Committee are appointed by the Assembly and following consultations with the regional groups, it has been agreed that the Byelorussian SSR (later renamed Belarus) should be appointed to fill the vacancy created as a result of the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany with effect from 3 October 1990.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session,

Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); and ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35).

4/ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

5/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

6/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

7/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

8/ International Labour Conference, 78th Session, 1991, Report of the Director-General, appendices (vol. 2), pp. 41-42.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

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* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in cooperation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 94 (III);

(b) Palestinians choosing not to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a condition sine qua non for the exercise by the

Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore that, upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from those territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the cooperation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the Twenty-eighth United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Madrid, 27 to 30 May 1991)

1. The Twenty-eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth European Seminar) was held at Madrid from 27 to 30 May 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Nana Sutresna (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman; Mr. René Juan Mujica Cantelar (Cuba); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). From 29 May, Mr. Borg Olivier acted as Chairman of the Seminar.

3. A total of 7 meetings were held and 17 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 50 Governments, Palestine, 3 United Nations organs, 1 United Nations specialized agency, 1 intergovernmental organization, as well as 23 non-governmental organizations, as observers, attended the Seminar.

4. A welcoming address was made by Mr. Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was made by his representative, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, Mr. Ronald I. Spiers. Mrs. Diallo also addressed the meeting on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Isaam Kamel el Salem, PLO representative in Madrid, read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

5. The Seminar participants adopted conclusions and recommendations and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Spain.

6. The two panels which were established and their panelists were as follows:

1. "The intifadah; the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory."

Mr. Freih Abu-Midain (Palestinian); Mr. Roberto Mesa (Spain); Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland); Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Germany); Mr. Moshe Amirav* (Israel); and Mr. Chawki Armali (Palestinian).

2. "The urgency of the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on the Question of Palestire and the Situation in the Middle East."

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* These panelists informed the United Nations Secretariat that they were attending the Seminar as experts and not as participants.

Mr. Michele Achilli (Italy); Rabbi Balfour Brickner (United States); Mr. Rafael Estrella (Spain); Mr. Yilmaz Altug (Turkey); Mr. Leonard Doyle (United Kingdom); Mr. V. J. Gogitidze (USSR); Mr. Richard Murphy (United States); Mr. Viktor V. Pashiouk (Ukrainian SSR); Ms. Inger Lise Gjorv (Norway); Mr. Izhar Beer* (Israel); and Mr. Saeb Erekat (Palestinian).

7. The report of the Seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

8. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar participants are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants noted that the Seminar was being held at a time when fundamental changes were taking place in the international political scene with increased international cooperation and greater respect for norms and principles of international law and morality, including the right of peoples to enjoy peace and their political, civil, social and economic rights.

(b) The participants considered that recent events in the Persian Gulf had heightened tensions and brought instability to an already troubled region and focused even more the attention of international public opinion on the urgent need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine. A solution was urgently needed in the aftermath of the Gulf War, taking into account the new opportunities that now exist, on the basis of international law and in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions, which must be applied in an even-handed manner.

(c) The participants urged the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, to undertake every effort to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned including the Palestine Liberation Organization. In this regard, the participants expressed appreciation for all efforts being made to initiate the peace process.

(d) The participants stressed that the peace process and related negotiations must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The participants expressed their conviction that the "land for peace" formula and the "two peoples, two States" principle adequately addressed the rights and concerns of both parties, Israelis and Palestinians, and their acceptance and implementation would result in a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

(e) Participants discussed the intifadah and the Palestine peace initiative of November 1988 and acknowledged these and other efforts by the Palestinian people in its struggle to obtain and exercise its inalienable rights. The participants expressed deep concern at the continued loss of life in the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel and at the

continued violations by Israel of the human rights of the civilian population in these territories. The international community had repeatedly deplored the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory which were in violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and contrary to United Nations resolutions and generally recognized norms of international law. The participants noted that the United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 681 (1990) urged the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the said Convention and asked the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure that Israel, as occupying Power, fulfilled its obligations under the Convention. The participants expressed full support of the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to pursue the idea of convening a meeting of the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to examine measures that might be taken by them under the Convention. They noted that the Secretary-General was requested to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and to make new efforts in this regard on an urgent basis, and to utilize and designate or draw upon the United Nations and other personnel and resources present there, in the area and elsewhere, needed to accomplish this task and to keep the Security Council regularly informed. Many participants appealed to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to take urgent measures, including the deployment of a United Nations force to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. The participants noted also the recent adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 694 (1991) on 24 May 1991 deploring, as it had done on previous occasions, Israel's deportation of Palestinians in violation of its international obligations.

(f) The participants deplored the process of Israeli colonization of the occupied Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements and usurpation of land and water resources. They were alarmed at the recent establishment of additional settlements and condemned these actions as insensitive and provocative, which created yet another most serious obstacle to peace. The international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions which had declared these settlements to be illegal and that they had to be dismantled.

(g) The serious deterioration in the economic situation in the occupied territory was a source of great concern to the participants. They stressed that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

(h) The participants, cognizant of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which recognizes the right of freedom of movement and the right of everyone to leave any country and the right to return to one's own country, condemned the settlement of immigrants and

Israeli civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and urged the Security Council to take appropriate measures to address this new and serious obstacle to peace.

(i) The participants expressed appreciation for the sustained efforts of the international community to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. They stressed the great importance of the valuable contribution which the European countries have made and could continue to make towards the achievement of an equitable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The participants welcomed the steps already taken by the European countries in this regard and urged them to further increase their valuable assistance to the Palestinian people. In this connection, the participants noted with appreciation the doubling of the aid by the European Community to the occupied territory and the efforts for facilitating and increasing the trade between the territory and the Community, both decided by the Council of Ministers of the European Community. The participants expressed their appreciation for the position adopted by European Governments in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Arab State to exist side by side with the State of Israel, in conformity with the two-State principle, and in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The participants considered that the European Community could play a valuable role in the peace process and should be an active participant in this process.

(j) The participants took note with appreciation of new initiatives proposed recently by a number of European countries aimed at enhancing security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

(k) The participants appealed to all European Governments to support the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in its efforts and urged the same Governments to give serious consideration to participation in the work of the Committee as members or observers. The participants considered that increased representation by European countries and the European Commission in the work of the Committee would broaden the scope of its deliberations and increase its effectiveness.

(l) The participants expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's continuing endeavours to advance the peace process and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference. The participants expressed deep appreciation to UNRWA for the invaluable work being carried out under difficult circumstances for the benefit of the Palestine refugees. They appealed to Governments to increase their contribution to the UNRWA budget and to other organizations and potential donors to contribute generously to the activities of UNRWA. They took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of and in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations.

(m) The participants noted with appreciation that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was intensifying its efforts to ensure that the United Nations regional seminars on the question of Palestine provided an opportunity for diverse points of view to be

expressed so that a real dialogue could be held among people of good will on all sides. In that context the participants expressed satisfaction that there had been a constructive and frank exchange at the Seminar between the Israeli and Palestinian participants. They acknowledged the efforts of the moderate elements within the Israeli community who are contributing constructively to the peace process and to a better informed public opinion in their country. The Seminar noted, however, that while Palestinians representing the Palestine Liberation Organization had participated in the Seminar, the official viewpoint of Israel had yet to be expressed.

(n) The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the valuable support the Government of Spain had extended over the years to the just cause of the Palestinian people. The participants attributed particular significance to the fact that the Seminar was held in Madrid, the capital of Spain, a country which had, throughout its history, accommodated people of different faiths and cultures including Moslems, Christians and Jews who were able to coexist peacefully and in harmony. The participants expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and people of Spain for providing a venue for the European Seminar on the Question of Palestine, and for the excellent facilities and warm hospitality extended to them.

ANNEX III

Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Montreal, 28-30 June 1991)

1. The Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in Montreal, Canada, from 28 to 30 June 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and leader of the delegation, and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Symposium was attended by 104 NGOs (64 participants and 40 observers); 3 NGO Coordinating Committees (North American, African, International); the Palestine Committee for NGOs; 19 Governments; 1 intergovernmental organization, and Palestine. The formal opening session was addressed by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo on behalf of the Committee. A message was received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and was read out by the representative of Palestine in Canada. A statement was also made by Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairperson of the NACC and moderator of the Symposium.

4. The theme of the Symposium was "Palestine - Protecting Lives and Promoting Peace - Impact of the Gulf War". The programme of work for the Symposium was composed of two panels and twenty workshops, as follows:

Panel I: "Palestine - Protecting Lives and Promoting Peace - Impact of the Gulf War";

Panelists: Ms. Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi (Palestinian); Mr. Michel Warshawski (Israel);

Panel II: "Palestine: Responding to Current Developments";

Panelist: Ms. Louise Cainkar (USA)

The workshops were organized under three general sub-themes:

"Special Protection Needs"

- Palestinian Children; Prisoners; Palestinian Women; Palestinians in the Middle East Region; and Palestinian Educational and Cultural Institutions.

"Critical Issues for NGO Work"

- Land, Settlements and Immigration; Ending Israeli Occupation - Suspending Aid and Imposing Sanctions; Strategies for Raising the Palestine Question in the Context of Grassroots Initiatives for a Resolution of the Gulf War; Delegations (Short and Long-term);

Twinning/Sister Relations; and International Law and Strategies to Encourage the United States and Canada to Develop Measures to Ensure Respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention.

"Organizing Strategies for Canadian and United States Constituencies for Protection and Peace"

- Unions; Religious Communities - Christian, Jewish, Muslim; Women; Universities; Educators - Elementary and Secondary; and Canadian-Arab and American-Arab Communities.

5. Among the recommendations of the workshops, North American NGOs were urged to intensify their mobilization effort and continue to raise public awareness in the region to the desperate situation of the Palestinian children; to draw attention to the plight of the Palestinians in Kuwait; to work for the re-opening of Palestinian universities; to launch an offensive against human rights abuses, against Palestinian prisoners and the Palestinian population in general in the occupied Palestinian territory. Other proposals included sanctions against Israel; support for the Israeli peace movement; the creation of a permanent structure to lobby the United States and Canada to accept the two-State solution and the facilitating of a greater linkage between women in North America and Palestinian women.

6. A teach-in was also held on the general topic "The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict." Further, the Symposium elected a new 12-member NGO Coordinating Committee for the region composed of three members from Canada and nine members from the United States.

7. The report of the Symposium was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

ANNEX IV

Declaration adopted by the Fifth United Nations Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 26-27 August 1991)

1. The fifth United Nations Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at Vienna on 26 and 27 August 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Symposium was attended by 125 NGOs (50 participants and 75 observers); 21 member States, 1 non-member State, 1 special agency of the United Nations, 2 intergovernmental organizations, and the delegation of Palestine. The opening session was addressed by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo on behalf of the Committee; by Mr. Mikko Lohikoski, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; and Ambassador Faisal Aweidah, head of the Palestine Mission to Austria and Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Vienna.

4. The Symposium had for its theme: "Time for Palestine - The role of Europe in securing Palestinian rights". Two panels were established, as follows:

Panel 1. "Implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine: European collective responsibility and strategies following the Gulf War."

Panelists:

Mr. Uri Avnery
Mr. Hael El Fahoum

Panel 2: "International protection of the Palestinian people: the responsibility of European States as co-signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention."

Panelists:

Mr. Bernard Mills
Ms. Khaled Muhammed Batrawi

5. Seven workshops were also organized on the following topics: (a) Effective lobby work in Europe: review of past experience and future initiatives; (b) Mobilizing public opinion in Europe: End the occupation now; (c) Contributing to fair and factual reporting on Palestinian issues in the mass media; (d) New initiatives for securing international protection for the

Palestinian people; (e) Economic effects of the Gulf War on Palestinians: NGO actions; (f) Jewish immigration and its impact on Palestinian rights: Responsibilities of European States and public opinion; and (g) Development projects on Palestine: How to cooperate with governmental and intergovernmental institutions.

6. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops, and elected a new European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), gathered at the Fifth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine meeting in Vienna on 26-27 August 1991 are very conscious of meeting at a time when it is crucially important for the Governments of all European countries to play a much more active role in securing a settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. Such a settlement must be based on the exercise of Palestinian rights including the right to return, to self-determination and to an independent Palestinian State on the currently and illegally occupied territories including Jerusalem. We remind all European Governments that they have repeatedly supported Palestinian rights in words. We now call upon them to implement their words without further delay by action based on all existing United Nations resolutions.

We call upon all European Governments to support the International Peace Conference repeatedly called for in General Assembly Resolutions since 1983 and supported by all European Governments. We affirm strongly that the Palestinian people must be represented in this and all conferences whether international or regional under whatever auspices by their chosen representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. This meeting calls upon all concerned to support the PLO in participating in all regional and international fora on the Middle East with all parties to the conflict on an equal footing.

We are of the view that all European Governments should play a major role in this process towards the International Peace Conference under United Nations auspices. Since three European countries, Britain, France and the Soviet Union are permanent members of the Security Council we call upon their Governments in particular to play a significant role in securing peace.

We note the proposal currently under discussion to hold a peace conference under USA and USSR auspices. We regard this conference as one possibility to open the way to the peace conference under United Nations auspices, which we continue to see as the most effective means to achieve peace.

We reject the Israeli and all non-Palestinian attempts to decide which Palestinians should be involved in international gatherings concerned with peace. We call upon all European Governments to oppose and reject such attempts, reaffirming the PLO's right to be present on an equal footing with all other parties.

We are appalled at the continuing repression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli Government and by its endless and accelerating violations of human rights, both in Israel and in occupied Palestine. We fully support the Palestinian struggle for self-determination expressed in the Intifada. From the repeated statements of certain members of the Israeli Government we recognize its ultimate policy to drive the Palestinians out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to replace them with settlers including immigrants from the Soviet Union.

We call upon all European Governments to exercise effective political and economic measures upon Israel, to make it respect the rights of the Palestinian people and comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. We remind all European Governments of their obligations as High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to take measures to ensure respect for the Convention. In that respect, we draw attention to the fact that the European Community is Israel's largest export market and that these exports are made on privileged terms not afforded to other countries. We, therefore note that the European Community is in an especially strong position to exert pressure, as it has to a limited extent in the past, in support of Palestinian rights. We call for positive European Community actions. We also call for Security Council action to take active measures for the enforcement of all United Nations resolutions on the Middle East and on the question of Palestine.

Much of our work in this Symposium was conducted in workshops. Their conclusions and recommendations are appended to this declaration.

We urge the United Nations to convene a European Regional Symposium of NGOs in 1992. We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session as part of the Committee's report.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this Symposium and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee Delegation. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat including the interpreters who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added valuably to our deliberations. We express our strongest protest against the action of the Israeli Government in preventing the distinguished expert, Mr. Sa'eb Erakat of An-Najah University from attending. We express our thanks to the Austrian Government for making available the Austria Centre for our Symposium.

ANNEX V

Declaration adopted by the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 28-30 August 1991)

1. The Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at Vienna on 28 to 30 August 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Meeting was attended by 207 NGOs (143 participants and 64 observers); 28 member States, 1 non-member State, 3 agencies of the United Nations, 2 intergovernmental organizations, and the delegation of Palestine. The opening session was addressed by Prof. Guido de Marco, President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly; Mr. Helmut Türk, Deputy Secretary-General and Legal Counsel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria; Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo on behalf of the Committee; Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; and Ambassador Faisal Aweidah, head of the Palestine Mission to Austria and Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Vienna, who read out a message from Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

4. The Meeting had for its theme: "Palestine Now!" Three panels were established, as follows:

Panel 1. "United Nations protection, United Nations resolutions: From the Gulf to Palestine."

Panelists

Mr. Radwan Abu-Ayyash
Mr. Mattityahu Peled

Panel 2. "Palestine Update"

Panelists

Mr. Haim Baram
Ms. Rana Nashashibi
Ms. Rima Tarazi
Mr. Nabeel Sha'ath

Panel 3. "NGO Forum - A call to action. What have we accomplished? What remains to be done? How shall we proceed?"

Panelist

Mr. Don Betz

5. The six workshops were also organized on the following topics: (a) The protection of the Palestinian people and its independent infrastructure in occupied Palestine: Focus on education; (b) Human rights in the occupied territories: the reunification of Palestinian families; (c) Soviet Jewish immigration and its effect on Palestinian human and national rights; (d) NGO methods and strategies for lobbying Governments on behalf of Palestinian national rights and strategies for mobilization for the International Peace Conference; (e) Regional demilitarization and disarmament: Establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction; and (f) Land, water and settlements.

6. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops, and elected a new International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Meeting, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the Non-Governmental Organizations gathered at the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, representing millions of people concerned with a peaceful resolution of that question, believe that the situation has acquired great urgency subsequent to the Gulf War. We are aware that we have convened at an historic moment of great challenge and great opportunity. We reaffirm our conviction that the conflict can only be solved through an international conference under United Nations auspices at which all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the PLO on an equal footing, are represented. Such an international conference should be convened with the utmost urgency.

We unconditionally affirm the rights of self-determination, statehood and return of the Palestinian people as guaranteed by the United Nations Charter and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

We are motivated by the genuine desire to establish a durable and just peace in the Middle East on the basis of international legitimacy as provided by all relevant United Nations resolutions, and mutual recognition of the right of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples for self-determination and the right to live in sovereign independent states alongside each other.

We note with utmost concern the continuous systematic policy of violating the rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories conducted by the Israeli occupation authorities. We deplore and denounce the continuation of the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab Territories

including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and Israel's brutal measures against the Palestinians, including the current policy designed to dismember the West Bank by restricting movement of Palestinian individuals and goods through the City of Jerusalem. We condemn the use of torture and brutality in the interrogation of Palestinian prisoners, including women and children.

We observe with great concern the simultaneous occurrence of the illegal colonizing settlement of Israelis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the escalation of the continuing process of the alienation of the indigenous Palestinians and the annexation of their land, and attempts to expel them out of their national homeland. We demand the immediate cessation of the construction and expansion of all Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine as a pre-condition to any peace process.

We draw attention to the fact that Jewish immigration poses a great threat to Palestinian survival on their land and is an obstacle to the resolution of the Palestinian problem due to the ensuing demographic changes. This is especially true while the Palestinians continue to be denied their right to return. We call upon new immigrants to Israel and all Israelis to refuse to settle in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and thus contribute to the efforts for a just settlement of the question of Palestine. We furthermore call upon the Soviet Union to refrain from facilitating Jewish immigration to Israel.

We denounce the double standard of the United States Government, characterized by its attitude with respect to the Palestinian right of self-determination as compared to that of Israel. We also condemn the United States Government's attempt to evade the need to convene the International Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, and its reluctance to take the necessary measures in order to overcome Israel's refusal to accept the principle of "land for peace" and bring a halt to its settlement activities in the occupied territories of the Golan, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

We oppose the massive and unconditional aid to Israel provided by the United States and other states which underwrites the continuing occupation. We call upon all Governments to condition all aid, loans and guarantees to Israel on the cessation of Israeli settlement construction and expansion in the Occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. We call on all Governments and the United Nations Security Council to institute sanctions against Israeli occupation.

We unanimously recognize and support the intifada as a national liberation struggle for the achievement of the State of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

We condemn the American and Israeli endeavours to bypass the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in the proposed regional conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict. We insist that Palestinians as all other peoples have full right to choose their own political representatives in any peace process. It is unacceptable and illogical that Israel be permitted to choose both the Israeli and the Palestinian delegations. Israel should have no say in naming or vetoing any

representative chosen by the Palestinians - whether on the basis of his or her political views, place of birth, present whereabouts or for any other reason.

The issue of the status of Jerusalem should not be excluded from negotiations, nor should Palestinian residents of that city be excluded from participation in the negotiations.

We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation, and that the United Nations Security Council establish in East Jerusalem an authority responsible for the monitoring of human rights violations in contradiction with the Fourth Geneva Convention. We urge the establishment of a Subcommission of the United Nations Security Council to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights. We call for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect the Palestinian nation and to stop Israel's attempts to destroy it.

We also observe that the Palestinians in Israel are subjected to a policy of legal and political discrimination. We further demand that Israel apply the principles of justice and individual and national equality to the Palestinians in Israel. We condemn the Israeli policy of continued confiscations of Arab lands and destruction of Arab homes for the purpose of settlement of Soviet immigrants inside Israel. We alert the NGO network to monitor and publicize these injustices.

We condemn the actions of the Government of Kuwait in forcibly relocating more than 300,000 Palestinians who had lived in Kuwait prior to 2 August 1990. We further condemn the collective punishment of an entire community based on the alleged actions of some of its members. Furthermore, we remain concerned about the fate of the 50,000 Palestinians still residing in Kuwait, especially the 25,000 who carry Egyptian refugee documents. It is incumbent upon the Government of Kuwait either to allow these Palestinians to stay and work in Kuwait and to cease treating them in a discriminatory manner, or to secure their admission to a country of their choice, including the country in which they or their families were born. We NGOs hereby notify the Government of Kuwait that we are monitoring its actions concerning these Palestinians and those still detained in Kuwaiti prisons and detention centres. We NGOs will bring violations of their rights to the immediate attention of the international community through all possible means.

We conducted work together in workshops and specific recommendations for actions are appended here. We consider these practical, action orientated proposals to be the central focus of our collective agenda for the coming year. To enhance our effectiveness we are organizing task forces among NGOs worldwide to concentrate our energies on specific projects. A number of special interest group meetings were also convened within the context of the international meeting and their proposals for actions are also appended. We believe that the implementation of these projects by NGOs world wide is a step on the path to a just and realistic peace in the Middle East.

We express our strongest protest against the action of the Israeli Government in preventing the distinguished experts, Mr. Sa'eb Erakat of An-Najah University and Mr. Raji Sourani of Gaza from attending. We know of other Palestinians living under occupation who were denied the possibility of

participating in this meeting by the Israeli Government, such as Ahmed Hatibbi and Rezeq Shuqeir, and we most forcefully denounce this action.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee Delegation. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat including the interpreters who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added valuable information to our deliberations. We express our thanks to the Austrian Government for making available the Austria Centre for our Meeting. We wish to express a special note of thanks and appreciation to Mr. Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly, for his important and insightful comments. We all consider his participation in our meeting to be a distinct honour.